

Alternatives Considered but Rejected

Trails West National Historic Park

In April 1978 a proposal was made in Congress for the creation of the “Trails West National Historic Park.” Under this proposal, the National Park Service would have acquired nationally significant resources related to the historic trails that were not currently under federal protection. These resources would have become components of a new unit of the national park system.

On the basis of national significance, as defined in *Criteria for Parklands, the California, Mormon Pioneer, Oregon, and Pony Express National Historic Trails*, all would qualify as units of the national park system. However, in the face of current budget constraints, the acquisition of the many resources outside federal jurisdiction would make this an unfeasible alternative at this time. Moreover, the proposal did not address management issues for resources that are not nationally significant, or that are under the control of other federal agencies.

Protection and Management of the Premier Resources Associated with the Historic Trails

Under this alternative, originally coined as “the Best of the West,” the Long Distance Trails Office would have focused its protection efforts on the premier historic resources in the trails corridor, including all national historic landmarks under federal, state, local, and private jurisdiction. Other resources, determined to be the most exceptional by virtue of their physical integrity and historic significance, also would have been included for protection and management. The remaining sites and segments would not have been addressed by the plan.

This alternative was rejected because it would not fulfill the requirements of the National Trails System Act, which requires the development of a comprehensive management plan, not a plan for selected sites only. Furthermore, the National Trails System Act suggests that the protection plan within the comprehensive management plan address all high-potential sites and segments.

Table 11: Comparison of Alternatives	
ALTERNATIVE 1: CONTINUATION OF CURRENT CONDITIONS	ALTERNATIVE 2: ENHANCED CONDITIONS AND A HISTORIC TRAILS PARTNERSHIP (THE PROPOSAL)
<p>Administration and Management</p> <p>A. Federal Level — Federal agencies, such as the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service, manage the largest segments of the trails; however, management varies dramatically between agencies and lacks formal coordination. The NPS Long Distance Trails Office is the main office for the administration of the four trails. Operations, staffing, office space, and budget continue as funding allows.</p> <p>B. State level — States and state agencies are involved in the protection and management of the trails and their resources; however, cooperation and communication within state agencies and among the different states involved continue to be weak.</p> <p>C. Local level — City and county governments, local agencies, land preservation groups, private landowners, and trail associations play important roles in trail administration and resource protection; however, cooperation and coordination among these entities is informal and largely dependent on personal contacts.</p>	<p><i>Together, the National Park Service and its partners would work to establish a historic trails partnership to assist in implementing a comprehensive strategy to enhance resource protection and to provide opportunities for visitors to have direct interaction with trail resources.</i></p> <p>A. Federal Level — The Bureau Of Land Management and the Forest Service would designate trail coordinators to assist the Long Distance Trails Office. Federal agencies would exchange personnel as necessary to promote cooperation and efficiency. Federal partners would jointly fund the operations of the NPS Long Distance Trails Office and its deployed staff. The Long Distance Trails Office would strive to achieve a higher level of cooperation among federal, state, and local agencies, trail associations, and private landowners. The trails office would also take on some new responsibilities such as acting as library for all information related to the management of the trails and acting as a focal point for a trailwide alert system. In order to improve its existing operations and to meet the trails office’s new responsibilities, staffing, office space, and its budget would be increased over current levels. In addition, Long Distance Trails Office’s deployed staff would be located at strategic points along the trails corridor to enhance operational effectiveness and to improve the administrative ability of the National Park Service.</p> <p>B. State level — The Park Service would encourage a higher level of cooperation and communication among the states and their respective agencies. State resource management agencies would support ongoing trail preservation efforts by assisting with elements of the protection plan. These agencies would also help monitor commemorative events and develop action plans that would address potential threats.</p> <p>C. Local level — Local agencies, trail associations and private landowners would be an important element of the historic trails partnership. Trail associations would be encouraged to help land managers and the trails’ administration by creating cooperating associations, friends groups, or similar organizations to help protect and enhance lands under federal jurisdiction. These organizations could also encourage volunteer activity to assist with trail protection and interpretation, help build a larger constituency for historic trails preservation and use, and persuade local landowners who owned significant trail resources to participate in the trails’ certification program. The trail associations would also be encouraged to assist federal, state, and local parks and museums in acquiring important pieces for their collections, such as journals, letters, and emigrants’ personal effects.</p>

Table 11: Comparison of Alternatives (continued)	
ALTERNATIVE 1: CONTINUATION OF CURRENT CONDITIONS	ALTERNATIVE 2: ENHANCED CONDITIONS AND A HISTORIC TRAILS PARTNERSHIP (THE PROPOSAL)
<p>D. Efforts are being made to implement certain provisions of the servicewide memorandum of understanding among the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and the Forest Service. However overall implementation is largely inconsistent and based on personal and professional contacts within the agencies.</p> <p>E. Cooperative management agreements, memoranda of understanding, and interagency agreements are being developed, as needed, by the Long Distance Trails Office.</p> <p>F. Continue current efforts to increase public awareness of historic trails continue.</p> <p>G. Official trail marking is provided by the National Park Service; however various generations of historic signs and blazings that have been erected by other groups remain. The need to develop a sign plan to outline how trails are to be marked and which parties are responsible for sign installation and maintenance is not being addressed.</p> <p>H. The administration of the trails relies on the efforts of volunteers. However, coordination among the individuals or parties volunteering is lacking. The Volunteers in the Parks and in the Forests Act provides volunteers, including cooperating landowners, protection from liability claims.</p> <p>I. Not applicable.</p>	<p>D. A servicewide memorandum of understanding among the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and the Forest Service would be implemented to accomplish the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) Develop appropriate organizational structures to facilitate interagency cooperation.(2) Develop staff assignments to the administrative office responsible for overall coordination of a national historic trail.(3) Cooperatively coordinate contacts with external constituents.(4) Promote efficient coordination of public and private funding to support trail activities.(5) Coordinate agency budget submissions for trail activities.(6) Facilitate federal coordination of national historic trails by agreeing to the transfer of funds, personnel, and services.(7) Establish interagency positions or an electronic communication network in trails office(s) to coordinate planning, administration, and management.(8) Identify agency personnel who work with national historic trails as part of their regular duties <p>E. Same as alternative 1.</p> <p>F. Efforts to increase public awareness of the historic trails would include the development of a national historic trails website, increased trail promotion, and heritage tourism.</p> <p>G. Trail marking — The National Park Services and its trail partners would cooperate to complete a sign plan. This plan would enable the historic trails partnership to reduce the amount of existing sign clutter and would ensure that new signs were placed in appropriate locations. The plan would also guide the National Park Service and its partners to use consistent materials and designs.</p> <p>H. Federal partners would develop a coordinated program to increase the efficiency of volunteer activities. As in alternative 1, the Volunteers in the Parks and Forests Act would continue to provide volunteers protection from liability claims.</p> <p>I. Technical taskforces or technical review teams would be convened to assist in the solution of special trails-related issues.</p>

Table 11: Comparison of Alternatives (continued)	
ALTERNATIVE 1: CONTINUATION OF CURRENT CONDITIONS	ALTERNATIVE 2: ENHANCED CONDITIONS AND A HISTORIC TRAILS PARTNERSHIP (THE PROPOSAL)
<p>H. Not applicable.</p> <p>(1) the identification of high-potential sites and segments</p> <p>(2) the development of a resource inventory program</p> <p>(3) trail mapping, including sites and segments</p> <p>(4) the assessment of carrying capacity</p> <p>(5) the identification of research needs and the coordination of research projects</p> <p>(6) the use of the resource protection tool kit</p> <p>(7) the establishment of protection corridors for high-potential segments as identified in the <i>Comprehensive Management and Use Plan</i> for the Oregon Trail</p> <p>Resource Protection</p> <p>A. While a formal protection plan is missing under current management, the following crucial functions are carried out by the National Park Service and its existing partners as much as possible:</p> <p>(1) the identification of high-potential sites and segments</p> <p>(2) the development of a resource inventory program</p> <p>(3) trail mapping, including sites and segments</p> <p>(4) the assessment of carrying capacity</p> <p>(5) the identification of research needs and the coordination of research projects</p> <p>(6) the use of the resource protection tool kit</p> <p>(7) the establishment of management corridors for high-potential segments as identified in the <i>Comprehensive Management and Use Plan</i> for the Oregon Trail</p> <p>B. Existing site certification procedures are used as a means to include nonfederal high-potential sites and segments as part of an authorized national historic trail.</p> <p>C. Challenge cost-share program continue.</p> <p>D. Current resource monitoring techniques, including the Long Distance Trails Office’s assistance in monitoring commemorative events continue.</p>	<p>H. A national historic trails owners forum would be established to enhance the appreciation and protection of all national historic trails</p> <p>Resource Protection</p> <p>A. To comply with the National Trails System Act, the Long Distance Trails Office, would coordinate with its partners to create an overarching protection plan. The following components of the protection plan would build on the crucial resource protection functions currently taking place:</p> <p>(1) The Long Distance Trails Office would be a gathering point for new submissions to the list of high-potential sites and segments and would cooperate with others to update lists.</p> <p>(2) The resource inventory program would be automated, linking sites and segments to digitized maps. The inventory would include information on resource condition, landscapes, as well as references to historical documentation.</p> <p>(3) The Long Distance Trails Office would have full GIS capabilities and would become the central depository for all existing GIS trail mapping data.</p> <p>(4) Carrying capacity — Indexes to establish potential vulnerability of resources and their present condition would be developed; the application of these indexes would allow for systematic monitoring of resource conditions.</p> <p>(5) The Long Distance Trails Office would have the lead in coordinating research projects, once research needs were established.</p> <p>(6) The tool kit would not change under this alternative.</p> <p>(7) Management corridors of varying widths for high-potential segments would be established in conjunction with all affected entities.</p> <p>B. A stronger effort would be made to encourage nonfederal landowners to submit sites and segments for site certification.</p> <p>C. Same as alternative 1</p> <p>D. In addition to current resource monitoring techniques, the Long Distance Trails Office would be the focal point of a trailwide alert system. When potential threats were identified, the trails office would be informed and would subsequently contact appropriate constituents and managers to prevent or mitigate negative activities or uses.</p>

Table 11: Comparison of Alternatives (continued)	
ALTERNATIVE 1: CONTINUATION OF CURRENT CONDITIONS	ALTERNATIVE 2: ENHANCED CONDITIONS AND A HISTORIC TRAILS PARTNERSHIP (THE PROPOSAL)
<p>Interpretation / Visitor Experience and Use</p> <p>B. Interpretation would continue to be developed by federal, state, and local entities, including trail associations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) Interpretive themes and subthemes have been developed to provide a framework and guidance for interpreting the trails in an integrated and systematic way.(2) Interpretive media and outreach activities would continue to include wayside exhibits, publications, and contact with schools.(3) Existing interpretive programs and facilities would continue to be relied on <p>C. Visitor Experience and Use</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) Recreational activities currently taking place throughout the trails corridor remain the same.(2) The development of an auto-tour route continues.	<p>B. As in alternative 1, interpretation would continue to be developed by federal, state, and local entities, including trail associations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) Interpretive themes and subthemes — Same as alternative 1.(2) Interpretive media and outreach activities — The Long Distance Trails Office would complete an inventory of existing wayside exhibits and interpretive markers; new interpretive projects would be encouraged to follow the design guidelines identified in appendix N; gradual efforts would be made to standardize the content and the display of interpretive information. The Long Distance Trails Office, with the assistance of the partners, would compile an annual report of trail outreach activities. Appropriate audiovisual productions would be used to orient visitors; the Long Distance Trails Office, in cooperation with the partners, would develop trailwide audiovisual presentations; in the future site-specific audiovisual programs might be produced. An interpretive prospectus would be prepared by the Long Distance Trails Office, in conjunction with the partners, to prescribe appropriate techniques to communicate specific interpretive themes and to ensure that programs at related sites complemented each other.(3) The Long Distance Trails Office would work with new facility proponents to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the message to be presented to the public. Certification would be offered to facility programs that interpreted the four trails. Technical assistance for interpretive planning would be provided to non-NPS, state, and local interpretive and educational facilities. <p>C. Visitor Experience and Use</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(1) Same as alternative 1, but emphasis would be placed on providing a more meaningful visitor experience through integrated development and programming.(2) Same as alternative 1.

Table 12: Comparison of Impacts	
ALTERNATIVE 1: CONTINUATION OF CURRENT CONDITIONS	ALTERNATIVE 2: ENHANCED CONDITIONS AND A HISTORIC TRAILS PARTNERSHIP (THE PROPOSAL)
<p>Impacts on Trail Resources</p> <p>Air Quality — The potential development of interpretive waysides and signs would result in minor and short-term fugitive dust emissions.</p> <p>Commemorative activities would continue to cause a temporary, but localized, increase in pollutants from vehicle emissions, as well as an increase in dust along dirt roads. The extent of the negative impacts would depend on the soil type, soil moisture, and the number and type of vehicles.</p> <p>Soils — Current levels of visitor use would continue to result in erosion and soil compaction throughout the trails corridor, particularly at and along popular sites and segments. Adverse impacts on soils from inappropriate use of all-terrain vehicles or the excessive use of support vehicles in commemorative activities could continue at current levels; however, the extent of the impacts would be determined by the soil types occurring at specific areas and therefore is not assessed for any particular trail.</p> <p>Potential adverse impacts on unstable soils from future construction activities would be minimized because these areas would continue to be avoided as much as possible.</p> <p>Water Quality — Current use levels would continue to result in minor sedimentation in watersheds along the trails corridor. This sedimentation would continue to result in minor adverse impacts on water quality. As in other natural resources areas, the variability in conditions along the trail would determine the extent of the impact.</p>	<p>Air Quality — Same as alternative 1 except more visitation would be expected under alternative 2 because of increased trail promotion. This might result in an increase in the amount of commemorative activities that take place in the trails corridor. These activities would continue to result in an increase in temporary and localized pollutants from vehicle emissions, as well as an increase in dust along dirt roads. However, a periodic resource monitoring program and improved coordination among the partners could limit adverse effects on air quality by carefully selecting sites and regulating the speed of heavy vehicles.</p> <p>Soils — Impacts would be the same as under alternative 1 except the increased levels of visitor use, including foot traffic and the use of all-terrain vehicles, that are possible under this alternative could increase erosion and soil compaction throughout the trails corridor, especially if this use was concentrated in areas that are already popular. Adverse impacts on soils from inappropriate use of all-terrain vehicles or the excessive use of support vehicles in commemorative activities could also increase.</p> <p>Mitigation such as increased visitor education and interpretation could deter some inappropriate trail uses and could disperse visitors so that impacts on soils were not as concentrated.</p> <p>The assessment of resource vulnerability and regular monitoring of specially fragile resources could limit adverse effects on soils. Managers would be able to identify those areas where soil damage was more likely to occur and could limit or mitigate negative impacts in these areas.</p> <p>Water Quality — While visitor use could potentially increase, adverse impacts on water quality from sedimentation continue to be minor. The assessment of resource vulnerability and regular monitoring of specially fragile resources would limit adverse effects on watersheds and drainages. Managers would be able to identify any watersheds or drainages where damage was likely to occur and limit or mitigate negative impacts from visitor use in these areas. As in alternative 1, the variability in conditions of watersheds and drainages along the trails would determine the extent of any impacts.</p>

Table 12: Comparison of Impacts (continued)	
ALTERNATIVE 1: CONTINUATION OF CURRENT CONDITIONS	ALTERNATIVE 2: ENHANCED CONDITIONS AND A HISTORIC TRAILS PARTNERSHIP (THE PROPOSAL)
<p>Vegetation — Current use levels would continue to result in vegetation trampling both off and on the trails. The presence of people along the trails would continue the potential for the introduction of exotic species along the trails corridor.</p> <p>The development of wayside exhibits and trail marking would have minor adverse impacts on vegetation, consisting of the removal or trampling of vegetation in the immediate area. However, the areas affected would be very limited because these activities would take place mostly on previously disturbed areas near roads.</p> <p>Wildlife — The potential construction of waysides and signs throughout the trails corridor would continue to take place near roads and in previously disturbed areas in most cases, limiting any adverse effects on animals and their habitat. There would be short-term disturbance to wildlife during construction, with most wildlife species expected to reoccupy nearby habitat when the construction activities were completed.</p> <p>The effects of visitation on wildlife would depend on the species, and would have to be considered on a case-by-case basis. Potential impacts on wildlife would be minimized by avoiding important habitat altogether or employing various measures to limit or restrict human activity.</p> <p>Cultural Landscapes — Interpretive wayside exhibits and trail markings would continue to intrude on the trail landscapes, but sensitive siting and design would minimize any negative impacts.</p> <p>Current levels of visitation would continue to affect the visual character of resources through the trampling of vegetation, soil compaction, and the development of widespread human trails. These activities would continue to affect the visual and aesthetic value of these resources.</p> <p>Lack of a comprehensive approach for resource inventory and monitoring means that resources would continue to be at risk due to overuse, inappropriate activities, or inadvertent destruction.</p> <p>Site certification would continue to have beneficial impacts on resources because the program encourages landowners to meet preservation standards in order to maintain certified status.</p>	<p>Vegetation — Same as alternative 1 except that increased levels of visitor use possible under this alternative, which could increase the amount of vegetation trampling both off and on the trails. Increased amounts of people along the trails would also heighten the potential of introducing new exotic species within the trails corridor.</p> <p>The assessment of resource vulnerability and regular monitoring of specially fragile resources would limit adverse effects on vegetation. Managers would be able to identify areas where damage to vegetation was likely to occur and limit or mitigate negative impacts from visitor use in these areas.</p> <p>Wildlife — Same as alternative 1.</p> <p>Cultural Landscapes — Same as alternative 1 except the increased levels of visitation expected under alternative 2 could increase adverse impacts on the visual character of trail resources. Visitor-related impacts such as the trampling of vegetation, soil compaction, and the development of widespread human trails would probably increase. However, the systematic inventory and monitoring of resources recommended in this alternative could prevent some of this resource deterioration.</p> <p>The identification of management corridors and the protection of resources within them would have beneficial impacts on the cultural landscapes associated with the trails because their historic character would be protected from inappropriate visual intrusions.</p> <p>Enhanced trail education programs and the resulting increase in public awareness would make visitors more sensitive to the significance and fragile nature of trail resources, in particular cultural landscapes. This in turn might have beneficial impacts on cultural landscapes as visitors would be more likely to appreciate and respect resources.</p>

Table 12: Comparison of Impacts (continued)	
ALTERNATIVE 1: CONTINUATION OF CURRENT CONDITIONS	ALTERNATIVE 2: ENHANCED CONDITIONS AND A HISTORIC TRAILS PARTNERSHIP (THE PROPOSAL)
<p>Archeological Resources — Future compliance documents would continue to require special precautions to prevent or minimize impacts on unknown archeological resources during construction.</p> <p>Current levels of visitor use would continue to cause erosion, some diagnostic artifacts and features would not be preserved for future analysis. Vandalism, illegal collecting and inadvertent damage would continue to reduce the number and quality of sites, which, over time, would have a negative impact on the archeological database.</p> <p>Site certification would continue to have beneficial impacts on archeological resources as the program encourages landowners to meet preservation standards in order to maintain certified status.</p> <p>Historic Resources — Federal recognition would probably continue to provide some protection for historic sites not on the National Register of Historic Places and might lead to the listing of eligible resources that have not yet been documented or evaluated.</p> <p>Use of historic sites and route segments would continue to contribute to the deterioration of historic trail resources.</p> <p>Site certification would continue to benefit privately-owned historic sites because it would afford these sites a degree of protection.</p> <p>Ethnographic Resources — No systematic inventory exists regarding ethnographic resources along the trail routes. Ethnographic surveys and studies would be initiated by the cooperators when appropriate. The cooperators would continue to maintain an open dialogue with all groups that assures respect and protection of these resources.</p>	<p>Archeological Resources — Same as alternative 1 except increased visitation, expected under alternative 2, could increase erosion. As a result, there could be an increase in the amount of diagnostic artifacts and features unable to be preserved for future analysis. The amount of vandalism, illegal collecting, and inadvertent damage could increase, and could further reduce the number and quality of archeological sites.</p> <p>The systematic inventory and monitoring of resources recommended in this alternative could prevent some impacts on archeological resources, as could increasing the level of interpretation and education about the trails. Both proposals could benefit archeological resources by either preventing resource impacts by restricting use, or by fostering a greater respect for trail resources.</p> <p>Historic Resources — Same as alternative 1 except increased use, which is expected under this alternative, could further contribute to the deterioration of historic trail resources.</p> <p>Increasing public awareness of national historic trails could result in greater appreciation of resources, which in turn could lead to more successful protection efforts and benefits for resources.</p> <p>The systematic inventory and monitoring of resources recommended in this alternative could prevent some impacts on historic resources, as could increasing the level of interpretation and education about the trails. Both proposals could benefit historic resources by either preventing resource impacts by restricting use, or by fostering a greater respect for trail resources.</p> <p>Ethnographic Resources — Same as alternative 1.</p>

Table 12: Comparison of Impacts (continued)	
ALTERNATIVE 1: CONTINUATION OF CURRENT CONDITIONS	ALTERNATIVE 2: ENHANCED CONDITIONS AND A HISTORIC TRAILS PARTNERSHIP (THE PROPOSAL)
<p>Impacts on Interpretation, Visitor Experience, and Use</p> <p>There would continue to be few opportunities to incorporate new interpretations and to enhance the existing interpretive messages presented to the public. Consequently, if research needs were not identified and projects not implemented, there would continue to be an unfulfilled potential to greatly improve the known history of the trails corridor.</p> <p>The role that American Indians played in the history of the emigrant trails is currently only minimally interpreted, and themes related to Indians would not be expanded in most cases. The lack of Indian-related interpretation would not adversely affect the visitor experience; however, the potential for greatly expanding and improving on this important theme would be unfulfilled.</p> <p>Continuing efforts to provide consistent and accurate trail markings would benefit visitors seeking to follow trail routes. In some cases, visitors would continue to be inconvenienced by a lack of both regulatory and educational / interpretive information. Also visitors could become confused by existing information that sometimes conflicts.</p> <p>The potential for adverse impacts on the visitor experience would continue because the condition of trail resources would go largely unmonitored, and visitor use would continue to be unregulated in most cases. Unmonitored use, especially if it increased could adversely affect the visitor experience because fragile and or character-defining trail resources could be damaged or destroyed. These affected resources often largely comprise the visual scene that visitors come to experience.</p> <p>Site certification would continue to benefit the visitor experience by opening access to privately-owned sites which might not be currently open to the public. The certification of programs and facilities would continue to enhance the visitor experience by ensuring the accuracy, consistency, and quality of the interpretive message presented to the public.</p>	<p>The inventory and monitoring program would benefit visitors by increasing their awareness, sensitivity, and understanding of trail resources. This would also benefit the visitor experience because preserved resources would contribute to the improvement of the interpretive programs.</p> <p>Identifying research needs and coordinating research projects would enhance the trails’ interpretive program and would lead to greater appreciation of the significance of the trails and a much-improved visitor experience.</p> <p>The development of a coordinated interpretive wayside system would be of great benefit to visitors. It would provide for consistent interpretation that met high standards. Visitors would benefit because they would be able to place the information presented at each wayside within the context of the trail. There would also be visual benefits as the exhibits would eventually be standardized as described in this plan in appendix N.</p> <p>Improved consultation with culturally-affiliated groups would ensure that interpretive media and programs presented a culturally sensitive and accurate picture of the role of American Indians in the establishment of the overland trails and the westward migrations of the mid-19th century.</p> <p>The use of traveling exhibits would benefit visitors because information would be presented without causing long-term negative visual impacts on trail resources. Traveling exhibits would also allow for the use of timely interpretive materials that can be tied to special commemorative events or seasonal events, which could benefit visitors attending the events.</p> <p>The annual report on outreach activities would result in beneficial effects because new ideas could be shared and incorporated into programs at a low cost. This is a good example of the benefits of cooperation among partners.</p> <p>Development of appropriate audiovisual presentations would greatly enhance the visitor experience. By updating the presentations to include up-to-date research and information, by making presentations relevant to various age groups, and by developing presentations of adequate length, the visitor experience would be greatly enhanced.</p> <p>An interpretive prospectus would have beneficial impacts on the visitor experience and would be of great assistance to trail managers and many of the partners.</p> <p>Site certification would continue to benefit the visitor experience by opening access to privately-owned sites. The certification of programs and facilities would enhance the visitor experience by ensuring the accuracy, consistency, and quality of the interpretive message.</p>

Table 12: Comparison of Impacts (continued)	
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<p>Impacts on Socioeconomic Conditions</p> <p>Economy — The overall economic effect would be minimal and limited to the counties crossed by the trails.</p> <p>Visitation might increase, but the expenditures associated with heritage tourism and other activities compatible with the protection of resources would not likely have significant economic impacts on the affected counties because the increase in visitation is expected to be limited.</p> <p>Landownership and Use — Land use and development could threaten trail resources. Left unchecked, heritage tourism and economic development could have a substantial effect. Zoning and easement patterns could be used to protect resources; however, inappropriate application of these and similar concepts could serve to foster inappropriate development. All groups should be encouraged to share plans and goals on a regular basis through regular meetings to insure communication that can lead to the protection of the trails and their resources.</p> <p>Access and Transportation — Implementation of additional auto-tour routes would potentially increase traffic volumes on the designated state and federal highways over the long term. However, potential increases in traffic volumes on these highway segments would likely be very small, and in general dispersed along many miles of highway. Consequently, there would be negligible adverse effect on traffic flows and levels of service on these routes.</p> <p>Localized adverse impacts on traffic flows would occur at sites of periodic commemorative activities. These effects may include increased traffic volumes and corresponding increases in travel times. However, impacts would likely be confined to areas in the immediate vicinity of the site, and would be temporary, occurring only during relatively infrequent commemorative activities. No long-term adverse impacts on transportation would occur at these sites under either alternative.</p>	<p>Economy — Increasing promotional activities and cooperative efforts associated with this alternative would be expected to generate increases in visitation and in associated spending. In general these economic impacts would be localized and might not result in long-term economic benefits. However, some communities in the trails corridor could benefit from increased spending associated with trail promotion and heritage tourism.</p> <p>Economic benefits from the trail marking and the development of wayside exhibits would be short-term, accrue to relatively few individuals and firms, and not likely to have any lasting positive effects on local economies.</p> <p>Landownership and Use — Same as alternative 1</p> <p>Access and Transportation — Same as alternative 1.</p>

Table 12: Comparison of Impacts (continued)	
ALTERNATIVE 1: CONTINUATION OF CURRENT CONDITIONS	ALTERNATIVE 2: ENHANCED CONDITIONS AND A HISTORIC TRAILS PARTNERSHIP (THE PROPOSAL)
<p>Other Impact Considerations</p> <p>Cumulative Impacts — Cumulative impacts would include developments or activities that would add to the impacts from implementing alternative 1.</p> <p>Drilling and construction along the trails corridor could pose adverse cumulative impacts on natural and cultural trail resources. Powerlines, pipelines, and drilling equipment could adversely impact significant trail landscapes, which could also adversely affect the visitor experience.</p> <p>Future highway construction could have cumulative adverse effects on trail resources such as ruts and swales, adversely affecting some trail resources. The construction of new or additional highways could directly affect trail resources by eradicating trail ruts and swales, or indirectly by compromising the integrity of a significant landscape.</p> <p>Urban and suburban development could adversely affect trail resources or associated historic landscapes in some areas. Western cities in particular are vulnerable to urban sprawl, and continued growth in cities such as Sacramento, Carson City, Salt Lake City, Casper, and numerous smaller communities could have adverse impacts on trails resources.</p> <p>The use of off-road vehicles such as 4x4s, ATVs, and motorcycles could eradicate trail remnants or contribute to erosion, which could seriously compromise the integrity of trail resources.</p> <p>Increases in grazing or cultivation of previously unplowed pasture land could affect or eradicate trail ruts and swales or significant archeological resources.</p> <p>Unavoidable Adverse Effects — Unavoidable adverse impacts would result from the installation of route signs along paved highways, trails markers, and interpretive waysides. These impacts would be site specific and negligible. Such development would visually intrude on the integrity of the historical scene along trail routes. There could be adverse impacts on soils and vegetation from visitor use.</p> <p>Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources — No resources would be irreversibly or irretrievably committed. Any potential loss of historic trail resources (for example, from natural deterioration) would be irreversible.</p> <p>Relationship Between Short-term Uses and the Main tenance and Enhancement of Long-term Productivity — Short-term uses of lands for signs and waysides would have no effect on long-term productivity.</p>	<p>Cumulative Impacts — Same as alternative 1.</p> <p>Unavoidable Adverse Effects — Same as alternative 1 except there could be adverse impacts on soils and vegetation from increased use, which is expected under alternative 2.</p> <p>Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources — Same as alternative 1.</p> <p>Relationship Between Short-term Uses and the Maintenance and Enhancement of Long-term Productivity — Same as alternative 1.</p>